



County of Placer  
**Agricultural Commission**

11477 E Avenue ▪ Auburn, CA 95603 ▪ (530) 889-7372

Rich Ferreira – Citrus

Patricia Beard - Livestock

Larry Jordan - Timber

Wayne Vineyard – Rice

Denise Moore - Nursery

Stewart Perry – Ag Processing

Jim Brenner – Fruit & Nut Farm

Elisa Noble – Small Farms

Patrick Bollinger – Foothill Farms

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**7:00 pm Monday January 13, 2020**

Placer County Planning Commission Hearing Room

3091 County Center Drive, Auburn, CA

County Contact: Joshua Huntsinger

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Wayne Vineyard. Roll Call- Present: Patricia Beard, Patrick Bollinger, Jim Brenner, Rich Ferreira, Larry Jordan, Denise Moore, Elisa Noble, Stewart Perry, and Wayne Vineyard.
- II. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR January 13, 2020:** Motion by Perry, Second by Jordan. MPUV.  
**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM November 18, 2019:** Motion by Perry, Second by Jordan. MPUV.
- III. **PUBLIC COMMENT**  
There was no public comment.
- IV. **ACTION ITEMS: None**
- V. **INFORMATION ITEMS:**
  - A. **Mid-Year Agriculture Marketing Program Update** – Carol Arnold, Executive Director, PlacerGROWN
    - Since July 1, 2019, 14 TV segments were done, including:
      - Loomis Certified Farmer's Market
      - Father and Son Farm
      - Fowler Nursery for Farm & Barn
      - Machado Orchards for the Apple festival
      - Mandarin Hill Orchard for the Mandarin season kickoff
      - Mandarin Festival
      - Auburn Farmer's Market was featured 4 times in 4 months
      - Citrus Restaurant week, had 4 segments the week of January 4<sup>th</sup>
    - They also had radio segments on the Kitty O'Neal show on KFBK and KAHN radio.
    - During the summer, 10,000 Mandarin Festival discount cards, with info on the back for the Farm & Barn Tour, were distributed with the help of partners

The Agricultural Commission is composed of appointed community members whose purpose is to advise the Board of Supervisors on all matters pertaining to agriculture including recommendations regarding California Land Conservation Act/Williamson Act applications. Residents are encouraged to attend and provide input. Placer County is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities are provided the resources to participate fully in public meetings. If you require disability-related modifications or accommodations, including auxiliary aids or services, to attend or participate in this meeting, please contact the Placer County Agriculture Department at (530) 889-7372.



- They also worked on a Specialty Crop Grant Proposal which will be to update their marketing tool, such as their website and marketing materials.
- They met with the Leadership of Mountain Mandarin Growers Association to discuss PlacerGROWN picking up the marketing for the Association and to decide how to integrate them on the PlacerGROWN website. Still working on details, but by next mandarin season they will be doing the marketing for all events such as Orchards Days.
- They had a cooking demo at the Fall Home & Garden Show in Auburn
- Few events sponsored by PlacerGROWN:
  - Biggest Little Farm Movie shown at the State Theater in Auburn. Had excellent attendance.
  - Farm and Barn Tour had 13 farms participating and about 4500 attendees. Hoping to add more farms and barns this year.
  - Crop-to-Tabletop dinner was held at Hawks restaurant and was sold out in 30 minutes. They initially had 100 tickets and the restaurant added 15 more.
- Events for which they provided marketing support:
  - Loomis Eggplant Festival
  - Auburn Food and Wine Festival
  - Machado Apple Orchard Festival
  - Farm Bureau Harvest Hoedown
- Carol was a judge at the Mandarin Festival and Pilz Produce won.
- During Visit Placer Restaurant week, this year theme "Citrus". PlacerGROWN donated 1500 lbs. of fruit to restaurants.
- Carol thanked Elise Noble for helping with handing out PlacerGROWN Bags and marketing materials at various events.
- Invitation was extended to commission members to attend the Giant Pizza Party on May 17 to celebrate PlacerGROWN's 25th year. Tickets will be available for purchase and this will be an opportunity to provide support to farms and ranches.
- Questions were asked by the commission members regarding email and newsletter from PlacerGROWN not being received. Currently, due to staff issue, they are not able to send out emails or newsletters. Also a question was asked about the possibility of having more dinners.

#### **B. Beekeeping Ordinance Update** – Josh Huntsinger, Agricultural Commissioner

- Josh gave background information in order to get familiar with beekeeping issues, and the new beekeeping ordinance. Right now the County's ordinance addresses two issues.
  - The business licensing section, which in accordance with State Laws, require all beekeepers to register at a cost of \$10/per beekeeper, per year.
  - The zoning ordinance has a chart showing which zone district allow beekeeping and which do not. There is also a single line saying "Beekeeping and raising requirement shall be as required by the Agricultural Commissioner". This create a couple of situations, one is the commissioner

can set any requirements he chooses, as he see fit, and the other is there is no set standards to point to for reference.

- In the last 2 years, the #1 complaint at the Agricultural Department has been bee complaints. Complaints ranging from people having a few bees in their swimming pool, to a 20 years well established apiary who suddenly has a new beekeeper bringing new hives near his property, resulting in having too many bees looking for food, and spreading pests and diseases.
- Pesticide notifications. Adjacent farms with need to apply pesticide which may be harmful to bees need to notify the beekeeper. Registration help in knowing where the hives are and allow owners to take steps in protecting their hives.
- Last year the State allowed online access to register and now we are able to enforce registration with civil penalties for beekeeper who don't register their hives.
- Recently a meeting was held with the Board of Supervisor and a number of small scale hobbyist beekeepers having a big interest in extending beekeeping allowances to residential zoning. Right now it is allowed in all different Ag types of zoning including Residential Ag zoning, but not allowed in Residential Single Family zoning, small scale of 1/4 – 1/2 acres. Board of Supervisors were supportive in possibly allowing 1-2 hives on small residential parcels.
- To date, we had 2 meetings with beekeepers; a kickoff meeting and one with hobbyist beekeepers.
- Josh presented some high level key points on the new beekeeping ordinance.
  1. County registration requirements: State laws and reiterate those in our County ordinance
  2. Standards for sufficient water supply/source: Bees need to have a lot of water especially during summer time. Beekeepers need to provide adequate and stable water source.
  3. Standards for general maintenance of hives and comb, disease free, empty equipment: State Law on maintenance and reiterate in our County ordinance.
  4. Standards for setbacks from property lines, neighboring houses, bus stops, roads, etc.: Establish set backs away from roads and bus stops, etc....
  5. Definition of “commercial apiary” – less than 10 hives, or another number?: State law sets at 10 or more hives, 9 or less is non-commercial. Probably where the beekeepers want to keep those numbers.
  1. Separation standards (buffers) for commercial apiaries – 1 mile proposed: There is a finite amount of forage nectar producing plants for bees. Too many hives in one location, they will consume 100% of the forage and unable to feed themselves, result in beekeepers using supplements. Some counties have put in buffer standards between commercial beekeepers to be typically 1 to 2 miles. Right now, because we do not have set buffers, a lot of the existing commercial apiaries are closer than 1 or 2 miles. Grandfather language and arbitration will be needed to work out conflicts.

2. Ratio of hives per acre – 20-40/acre?: For example Nevada County has a 2 miles buffer restriction from May 15 - October 15, for blooming forage season. The cap total is 48 beehives for every 2 miles. This example may be too restrictive and may not serve our existing commercial beekeepers.
  3. Ownership ID/Contact information posting: State law and reiterate in our county ordinance. Hives to be marked, visibly, with contact information to be able to respond to complaints. To track down any unmarked, unregistered hives, we need to do a parcel search with the Assessor Office for ownership contact info.
  4. Registration consistent with state law: Reiterate in our county ordinance.
  5. Written property owner permission: Proactive proof from property owners to have permission to put bees on their property. Generating a lot of discussion among beekeepers.
  6. Abatement of abandoned or trespassing hives – authority and means of removing and disposing of hives: Fines are not doing any good if we cannot contact the hive owner. Other counties have abatement authority. Working with beekeepers to physically seize beehives, after proper notice, remove beehives and sell them off.
  7. Zoning changes to allow 2-3 beehives in residential (RS) zoning: To potentially allow beehives in residential backyards.
- Lots of outreach has been done to get beekeepers to register. Compiling a mailing list to keep them notified on any upcoming meetings.

### **C. Nevada Irrigation District Update – Laura Peters, Division 4 Director, NID**

- As of January 2, 2020: storage is at 200,062 acre/feet, 107% of 7 years average and 74% capacity.
- Precipitation is at 21.75" at Bowman, 84% average.
- 3 Board Meetings this month including a special meeting in developing raw water master plan to track supply/demand. Will have more public outreach.
- Almost done with phase 1 of Combie open canal to an 8' diameter pipe.
- At previous meeting, Greg Jones, Assistant General Manager, discussed PG&E Power Distribution Acquisition. A bid was put in last Aug-September for \$300 million for purchases of distribution assets from PG&E. By November 2019, there still was no words back, so they decided to put a hold on purchase until PG&E bankruptcy is resolved.
- Blackouts: Emergency propane generators were purchased for air quality control. With extended outage and being in fire zone, they found that they are not able to refill propane tank. They are replacing some with diesel generators.
- Doing another cost of service study. Last rate increase was done as a postage stamp study. They have not done a true cost of service study to find out what is the true cost of delivering water from Bowman to Camp Far West, and different segments of our facilities. A true cost of service should be out in a couple of months, by February or March. They will then have to

redo a rate study to figure out how to pay for it. In addition Laura Peters and Chris Bierwagen, Division 2 Representative, will head a subcommittee and work with the Ag community to truly define what is true Ag in order NID, to preserve the ag heritage, keep ag alive in both counties, and identify who needs help to make ends meet. Will keep us informed on upcoming meetings. A scoping meeting is planned for the 27<sup>th</sup> of this month.

- Dotty North has a pipeline at a pinch point in the Dotty Ravine which will be replaced with a new pipe. Some CEQA issues are being worked out in the next couple months.
- Hemphill CEQA is underway. They have 2 options: 1<sup>st</sup> option is to put in an off stream infiltration bed adjacent to Auburn Ravine at Hemphill. 2<sup>nd</sup> alternative, is to take water out by Gold Hill, through the Placer Yard and down Fruitvale, through Fowler and down to Virginia Town. There will have no facilities whatsoever in the vicinity, except for a pipe going over on a bridge. PCWA & PGE put water in that ravine, but NID small customer but still senior right holder on ravine. Meanwhile, Public Trust Organization called Water Audit California sued NID, as they want them to hurry and build the project, which is actually slowing them down. Hoping that by end of year they will have a CEQA document.

## **VI. REPORTS**

**A. Agricultural Marketing Program** – Josh Huntsinger – No report

**B. Livestock and Natural Resources Farm Advisor** – Dan Macon – Absent

**C. Horticulture and Small Farms Advisor** – Cindy Fake.

- Mandarin update: Heavy rain and strong wind in November resulted in serious loss for majority of farmers. Excess water made the fruit un-pickable. High humidity, developed high incidents of rot, including one called “Mucor rot” which shows as white fungus covering the fruits. There are talks about changing practices, and mandarin varieties to earlier ones.
- Mandarin Growers Association has been sunsetted, so UCCE will now have quarterly meetings for mandarin growers. Next meeting is February 24<sup>th</sup> to review the season, what happened to growers and what to do going forward.
- Upcoming workshops and classes:
  - Crop insurance workshop
  - Growing Citrus in the Foothills class, end of Feb - beg of March, for beginning citrus growers.
  - Pruning workshop in March
  - Farm business Planning 6-weeks course will be replaced with a series of Business planning workshops:
    1. Cash flow management
    2. Capital purchases
    3. Budgeting
    4. Farm taxes

5. 2 risk/disaster planning and 1 will be joint with Livestock workshop

- Dan Macon's Livestock calendar of workshops is coming out soon.
- Cindy had an opportunity to go back to the Republic of Georgia to work with mandarin growers as a university academic. She had the opportunity to do assessments of the work of farmers who implemented mulching mandarin orchards there. She was pleasantly surprised of the results. She is planning on going back several times a year over the next 2 years.
- Cindy announced that she will be going on an academic sabbatical leave and that she will be completely away from the County Director job from July 1, 2020 to June 31, 2021. She will be spending half of her time between here on her Placer County Mandarin research and the other half going to Georgia, Sicily and Madeira in Portugal. Advisors from other counties will be available to answer questions, Dan Macon will be the sole advisor and County Director for both Counties.
- Announced the open position for the Placer County 4-H Program Manager. Position is available through a link on the UCCE website. Deadline to apply is January 20, 2020.

**D. Water Supply Update – Josh Huntsinger**

2 years ago a discussion about Placer County Water Agency, Zone 5 (no longer called Zone 5), 12 large agricultural producers South and West Lincoln. They received water delivery, even though not always guaranteed, unless there was a severe drought. After PCWA renegotiated their PG&E contract the cost went from \$2 acre/feet to \$42 acre/feet. Zone 5 customers potentially saw an increase from \$18 acre/feet to \$40 acre/feet, more than 100% increase in price.

In contrast, Loomis and Penryn customer saw an increase of about 30-40%.

Worked on a Sustainable Irrigation Pilot Program funded on the county side. It was a joint county and PCWA effort. The county funds come from Placer Legacy, to help farmers keep going and help preserve about 4500 acres of production agriculture that is irrigated with that water. For the last 2 years, they bought down \$10 per acre/feet, so instead of \$42 acre/feet it is now reduced to \$32 acre/feet. The total amount purchased was about 7000 acre/feet each year, about \$70,000 year. The program ended this past fall. County meeting with PCWA to discuss and consider option for future to possibly extend another year or two. More to come and update on this next month.

**VII. AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS – Josh Huntsinger**

- January 6 – Planning department hosted meeting with some leaders of the Placer County Vintner's Association to go over Winery ordinance and requirements. Next Planning Commission meeting February 13 to possibly approve the ordinance.
- Placer County is under quarantine for the Asian Citrus Psyllid. The Asian Citrus Psyllid was found 3 times in Placer County. 1st case was in Lincoln, Fall 2016, when a resident had brought in potted citrus trees from Orange County highly infested. Next 2 cases were in the summer of 2017, at 2 different locations. One in Roseville and other in South Roseville, and both had a single adult Asian Citrus Psyllid in traps in urban setting, nowhere near any commercial citrus producers. To date we have found no additional Asian Citrus Psyllid. It has been about 2.5 years since we found the Asian



Citrus Psyllid. California Dept. of Food & Agriculture protocol on quarantine is once 2 years has expired without any new finds, they are supposed to lift the quarantine. Josh sent a letter to CDFA requesting that they remove the quarantine. This is also a federal quarantine, so they need to have approval from USDA. CDFA & USDA are in negotiations and hopefully will result in lifting the quarantine on Placer County.

- Industrial Hemp: We are in a holding pattern right now. USDA released their regulatory proposal in late October 2019 which is now in effect. CDFA has until May to submit a State plan for approval. For 2020 we are going to keep prohibition in place, and once California has a plan approved by USDA we will revisit this issue.
- December 18 Josh attended a joint meeting with Nevada County Fish and Game Commission and Agricultural Commission. The lead wolf biologist with 20+ years' experience had a presentation on wolves in California including, about how many do we have? Where do they come from? How much food do they have available in California? He mentioned that other states have livestock protection in place, even in States with wolves on the endangered species list. No wolves in Placer County yet.
- Josh will not be able to attend the March meeting as he will be in DC. Offered to maybe skip meeting if no items are urgent. If not, the Deputy can attend in his place.
- Elise Noble:
  - To add to the wolf issue she attended the CA Farm Bureau meeting. The CA Farm Bureau & Cattleman are working with the Fish and Game Commission to work on a reimbursement program based on other states.
  - Let Elise know if you would like to get on the email list to receive mail from Noelle Cramer with California Farm Bureau regarding wildlife updates.
  - Connie Watson and Elise Noble have been doing a lot of Ag education at various events over the last 4-5 years and have been invited to go to different places. This year they are grouping all those events into a program. They have asked PlacerGROWN and Placer Farm Bureau to be the primary sponsors. Those events will include:
    - Sacramento Home & Garden shows in March & October
    - Auburn Home & Garden Shows in April & September
    - Ag Day in March or April
    - Gold Country fair the Ag-venture area.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT:** Wayne Vineyard adjourned the meeting at 8:25PM.